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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 HA-05
AID-05 IO-14 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 DOE-15
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O 151947Z MAR 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9867

SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 2086

E.O. 12065: XDS-1 3/15/05 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJ: [REDACTED] HUMAN RIGHTS; AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH GENERAL VIOLA

1. [REDACTED] ALL TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: GENERAL VIOLA WILL LEAVE MILITARY AND PUBLIC SERVICE EFFECTIVE END OF THIS YEAR. HE FORESEES NO LABOR UNREST WITHIN NEXT TWENTY DAYS, BUT DOESN'T DISCOUNT STRIKES AFTER THAT. VIOLA STILL INSISTS HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS HAVE IMPROVED AND WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. HE STATES COURTS SHALL BE THE VEHICLE TO RETURN TO RULE OF LAW.

3. AT GENERAL VIOLA'S REQUEST, I MET WITH HIM AT HIS OFFICE AT NOON TODAY (MARCH 15). ADHERING TO TRADITION, WE FIRST CONSUMED A CUP OF BITTER-TASTING, THICK, MOLASSES-LOOKING SUBSTANCE MIS-NAMED COFFEE. HE APPEARED JOVIAL AND JOKINGLY TOLD ME HE WAS READY FOR THE CROSS-EXAMINATION. I REMINDED HIM I WAS THERE AT HIS INVITATION AND THUS WAS PREPARED FOR THE GOOD NEWS. HE STATED HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY SCOOPS BUT FELT IT IMPORTANT OUR DIALOGUE CONTINUE ON A REGULAR BASIS.

4. VIOLA'S RETIREMENT: I TOLD VIOLA RUMORS AROUND BARBER [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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SHOPS AND BEAUTY PARLORS HAD HIM RETIRING AT THE END OF THE YEAR. THIS PRECIPITATED A SMILE FROM EAR TO EAR AND

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/PS
Margaret P. Grifeld, Director
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full
() Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

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REPLIED "YOU DON'T MISS A THING, DO YOU?". I TOLD HIM I HATED TO DEPEND ON MY BARBER FOR INTELLIGENCE AND PREFERRED THAT HE INTERPOSE HIS OWN GENERAL DENIAL. VIOLA STATED HE DIDN'T INTEND TO PLAY GAMES AND HIS UNREVOCABLE ANSWER WAS THAT HE DID INTEND TO RETIRE AT THE END OF YEAR. HE REPEATED THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TWICE FOR EFFECT. "I AM RETIRING AT THE END OF THE YEAR." FOR HIS PERSONAL COMFORT, I TOLD VIOLA I HATED TO SEE HIM RETIRE JUST WHEN ARGENTINA'S FUTURE LOOKED BRIGHT. HE THANKED ME AND SAID HE EXPECTED GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE VASTLY IMPROVED BY THE TIME HE LEFT OFFICE. I FELT IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR ONE DAY TO ASK HIM ABOUT HIS SUCCESSOR.

5. DISAPPEARANCES: I HANDED VIOLA A LIST OF DISAPPEARANCES AND REAPPEARANCES FOR 1978. I EXPLAINED TO HIM ABOUT MY CONVERSATION WITH BRIG. GENERAL GRAFFIGNA ABOUT ONE WEEK AGO IN MENDOZA. (SEE B.A. 1763). HE KNEW ALL ABOUT THE MENDOZA WINE ORGY AS HE HAD DISCUSSED IT WITH GRAFFIGNA. I REMINDED HIM OF GRAFFIGNA'S STATEMENT THAT THERE WERE NO DISAPPEARANCES IN 1978 AND WAS THRILLED TO GET THAT MESSAGE. ON THE OTHER HAND, I DID HAVE A LIST OF DISAPPEARANCES IN 1978 AND HOPED HE WOULD HELP ME CORRECT OUR RECORDS. VIOLA SAID GRAFFIGNA WAS WRONG IN ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE IMPRESSION THERE WERE NO DISAPPEARANCES IN 1978. HE THEN ASKED HOW WE OBTAINED THOSE FIGURES. I TOLD HIM INFORMATION CAME FROM HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS PLUS COURT RECORDS ON WRITS OF HABEAS CORPUS FILED. HE ACCEPTED THIS WITHOUT ANY REBUTTAL. VIOLA THEN REPEATED HIS PREVIOUS STATEMENTS THAT DISAPPEARANCES WOULD BE HELD AT A MINIMUM AND PREFERABLY DOWN TO ZERO. HE THEN ASKED ME IF I KNEW GENERAL GALTIERI. I REPLIED I KNEW GENERAL GALTIERI WELL AND HE WAS NOW COMMANDER [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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OF FIRST CORPS. VIOLA STATED HE HAD PLACED GALTIERI IN FIRST CORPS AS PART OF HIS PLAN TO REDUCE DISAPPEARANCES. HE SAID THE FIRST CORPS WAS THE BIGGEST OFFENDER WHEN IT CAME TO DISAPPEARANCES. HE THEN SPOKE HIGHLY OF GENERAL LEPORI, DESCRIBED AS A MAN OF HIS FULL CONFIDENCE, WHO LIKEWISE HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO TERMINATE ALL DISAPPEARANCES IN THE MENDOZA AREA. (SEE B.A. 1963).

6. ALLEGED DISAPPEARANCES IN MAR DEL PLATA IN JANUARY: I TOLD VIOLA WE HAD INFORMATION, NOT YET SOLIDLY FIRMED UP, THAT EIGHT PERSONS HAD DISAPPEARED IN MAR DEL PLATA DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY. OUR INFORMATION INDICATED THESE PEOPLE

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WERE ACTIVE MEMBERS OF "PARTIDO SOCIALISTA DE TRABAJADORES." I TOLD VIOLA IT WAS RECENTLY REPORTED IN THE MEDIA OF THE ARREST OF SOME MEMBERS OF THIS POLITICAL FACTION IN ROSARIO. THESE PEOPLE REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN CHARGED WITH VIOLATING LAWS AGAINST POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND WERE UNDER COURT JURISDICTION. I EXPLAINED WE HAD ALSO HEARD TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THIS FACTION HAD DISAPPEARED IN LA PLATA, BUT SHORTLY THERE-AFTER RESURFACED. MY QUESTION WAS WHY MEMBERSHIP IN THE MAR DEL PLATA PARTY GROUP CARRIED THE DESTINY OF DISAPPEARANCE WHILE IN ROSARIO AND LA PLATA IT HAD A DIFFERENT TAG. VIOLA STATED HE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE MAR DEL PLATA INCIDENT AND WOULD CHECK IT OUT. (NOTE: THESE DISAPPEARANCES HAD EARLIER BEEN REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY -- BUT WITHOUT DETAIL -- SEE REFTTEL B.A.1539).

7. JACOBO TIMERMAN: I TOLD VIOLA - "THE JACOBO TIMERMAN CASE IS HOT AGAIN." HE WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE TIMERMAN ARTICLE WHICH APPEARED RECENTLY IN TIME MAGAZINE. HE WAS ALSO FAMILIAR WITH LIBERATION PETITIONS GIVEN PRESIDENT CARTER BY MEDIA MEMBERS DURING THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST. I TOLD HIM THERE WAS A RESURGENCE OF INTEREST IN CONGRESS OVER THE TIMERMAN CASE. I STATED INTEREST IN THIS CASE HAD NEVER WANED IN THE WHITE HOUSE, DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOR WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. I VOLUNTEERED MY
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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GUESS WAS THAT ONE OF IAHRC'S TOP PRIORITIES WOULD BE THE TIMERMAN CASE. I SUGGESTED IF GOA IS TO FACE REALITY AN ANSWER TO THE TIMERMAN CASE SHOULD EXIST FOR IAHRC.
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I THEN DISCUSSED WITH HIM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S INVITATION TO TIMERMAN TO LECTURE ON JOURNALISM IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE APPEARED TO BE COGNIZANT OF THE INVITATION. VIOLA JUST SHOOK HIS HEAD AND STATED THEY HAD TWO NIGHTMARES IN THEIR MIDST-- TIMERMAN AND HECTOR CAMPORA. HE TOLD ME HE FAVORED TIMERMAN'S RELEASE, - BUT IT WOULD CREATE AN INTERNAL COMBUSTION OF HIGHER MAGNITUDE THAN THE ATOM BOMB. HE EXPLAINED HE WAS REFERRING TO INTERNAL MILITARY DISSENT. HE ALSO SAID THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC CARED LESS WHETHER TIMERMAN WAS HERE OR IN ISRAEL. TO PUT IT BLUNTLY VIOLA'S EXACT WORDS WERE "AL PUEBLO ARGENTINO LE IMPORTA UN PITO EL CASEO DE TIMERMAN". TRANSLATING IT FREELY, THIS PHRASE MEANS "THE ARGENTINE PUBLIC CARES ONE IOTA ABOUT THE TIMERMAN CASE". COMMENT: ADMITTEDLY, I DIDN'T TRANSLATE THE PHRASE IN "STREET LANGUAGE", WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE COLORFUL AND ACCURATE. END COMMENT. VIOLA TOOK NOTES ON MY COMMENTS AND SAID HE WOULD BE TAKING IT UP WITH PRESIDENT VIDELA. HE MADE IT CLEAR HE DIDN'T WANT TO RAISE ANY FALSE HOPES ON TIMERMAN.

8. LABOR STRIKES: ON BEING ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE MUCH HERALDED STRIKES, VIOLA STATED, IN HIS OPINION, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY MAJOR LABOR PROBLEMS WITHIN THE NEXT TWENTY DAYS. HE ADMITTED HE HAD TALKED TO LABOR LEADERS AND HAD CALMED THEM

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DOWN FOR A SHORT PERIOD. VIOLA SAID AFTER TWENTY DAYS ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. HE SAID HIS STRATEGY WAS TO AGAIN POSTPONE MATTERS FOR ANOTHER TWENTY DAYS OR SO. HE FELT CONFIDENT LABOR STRIFE WOULD BE RESOLVED. HE MENTIONED FORMER PRESIDENT FRONDIZI AND DR. FRIGERIO, KEY MEMBERS OF MID POLITICAL PARTY, AS THE INSTIGATORS OF STRIKES. HE DESCRIBED FRONDIZI AND FRIGERIO AS A COUPLE OF OVER-RIPE TOMATOES, WHO HAD LOST THEIR JUICES, DEVOID OF ALL JUDGMENT IN NOT RECOGNIZING THEY WERE POLITICALLY DEAD. VIOLA SAID THEY WERE SO DEAD THAT THEY COULDN'T EVEN ATTRACT FLIES. VIOLA SAID THE MID AND A FEW FRUSTRATED BUSINESSMEN HAD LAUNCHED THE STRIKE FEVER ON THE SOLE BASIS OF GETTING RID OF MIN OF ECON MARTINEZ DE HOZ.

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9. LABOR LAW: I INQUIRED IF THE "LEY DE SOCIEDADES PROFESIONALES" HAD RUN INTO A SNAG. VIOLA REPLIED THIS LEGISLATION WAS BEFORE THE CAL (LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE) AND PREDICTED NO PROBLEMS WITH IT. HE PREDICTED IT WOULD BE OUT WITHIN NINETY DAYS OR SO. VIOLA ADMITTED THE LAW, AS NOW PROPOSED, DOES NOT MEET "IN TODO" WITH ALL OF LABOR'S WISHES, BUT IT'S A FOOT IN THE DOOR. HE SAID IT WOULD PERMIT LABOR UNIONS TO OPERATE WITH MORE FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY, BUT YET HAD SOME LIMITATIONS.

10. TLATELOLCO: THIS PERENNIAL SUBJECT WAS NOT EVEN RAISED BY ME. VIOLA ANTICIPATED MY INQUIRY ABOUT TLATELOLCO, SO HE VOLUNTEERED HE HAD DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT WITH VIDELA, AND TOLD HIM TLATELOLCO WOULD BE RATIFIED. HE SAID THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS WITH ITS RATIFICATION. VIOLA THEN STATED NOT TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE TIME FACTOR. I LAUGHED HEARTILY SO VIOLA SAID "DON'T BLAME ME, YOU MUST ADMIT I'M TRYING."

11. INDEPENDENCY OF JUDICIARY: I COMPLIMENTED VIOLA FOR
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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THE LATITUDE AND INDEPENDENCE GIVEN THE COURTS LATELY FROM EXECUTIVE AND MILITARY CONTROL. I THEN TOLD VIOLA IT WAS UNFORTUNATE DOMINGO BERRUETA, A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER, WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND CONFINED TO VILLA DEVOTO PRISON BY THE COURTS, WAS RECENTLY FREED BY A BAND OF SOLDIERS AND PLACED IN A MILITARY PENAL INSTITUTION. I TOLD VIOLA THIS CASE HAD RECEIVED MUCH PUBLICITY AND IT APPEARED ONCE AGAIN THE ARMY WAS RUNNING "ROUGH SHOD" OVER THE COURT SYSTEM. VIOLA ADMITTED THE ARMY HAD ERRED AND MADE A HORRIBLE MISTAKE. HE SAID THE JUDGE ALSO HAD ERRED BY VOLUNTEERING THE INFORMATION TO THE PRESS. VIOLA SAID THE CASE WOULD BE RESOLVED WITH A PUBLIC STATEMENT INDICATING THE COURTS RETAINED JURISDICTION AND WAS NOT A MILITARY MATTER. VIOLA STATED THE COURTS MUST MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE.

12. COMMENT: I COVERED A WIDE SPECTRUM OF TOPICS WITH VIOLA. I EXPECT TO DEVOTE A MAJOR PORTION OF MY TIME DURING OUR NEXT MEETING ON THE SUBJECT OF THE LIMITED NUMBER OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS, SUPPOSEDLY STILL ALIVE AND ALLEGEDLY HELD IN CLANDESTINE PRISON CENTERS. THIS TOPIC HAS NEVER BEEN RAISED BY ME DUE TO LACK OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE. I THINK I HAVE AN INCIDENT, PROPERLY HANDLED, WHICH CAN BRING THE MESSAGE HOME, AS I FEEL I CAN SUBSTANTIATE THE CASE, WITHOUT BURNING THE

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SOURCE. VIOLA WASN'T BASHFUL IN TELLING ME THINGS WOULD
GET BETTER IN ARGENTINA REFERENCE HUMAN RIGHTS. HE HAS
TOLD ME THIS SO MANY TIMES I'M CONVINCED HE BELIEVES IT AND
IS MAKING AN EFFORT TO MAKE THE SHIP STEER A TRUE COURSE.
I'M POSITIVE VIOLA-VIDELA TEAM IS IN A BETTER POSITIO OF
STRENGTH NOW, - BUT I STILL DON'T PERCEIVE HE HAS FULL
COMMAND OF ALL THE ARMY RASCALS. I SENSE HE STILL HAS
SOME MORE WEEDING TO DO.
CASTRO

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